

**IN THE CLAIMS**

1-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently amended) ~~A swellable~~ Swellable hydrogel-forming polymer particles comprising (a) a swellable hydrogel-forming polymer and (b) up to 10% by weight, based on the swellable hydrogel-forming polymer particles, of at least one hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure, wherein the swellable hydrogel-forming polymer particles have a particle size in the range of 45 to 1000  $\mu\text{m}$ .

18. (Currently amended) The polymer particles of claim 17 wherein said swellable hydrogel-forming polymer ~~comprises~~ particles comprise at least 0.005%<sub>1</sub> by weight<sub>2</sub> of the hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure.

19. (Currently amended) The polymer particles of claim 17 wherein the hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure comprises a polyester formed from a polyol and 2,2-dimethylolpropionic acid.

20. (Currently amended) The polymer particles of claim 17 wherein the hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure comprises a polypropyleneimine, a polyamidoamine, or a polyesteramide.

21. (Currently amended) The polymer particles of claim 17 further comprising a powdery additive, a dusty additive, or a mixture thereof.

22. (Currently amended) The polymer particles of claim 21 wherein said additive is a metal salt, a pyrogenic silica, a polysaccharide, a nonionic surfactant, a wax, diatomaceous earth, or a mixture thereof.

23. (Currently amended) The polymer particles of claim 21 wherein said additive is in a form of hollow microspheres from 1 to 1000  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter and having a wall thickness of 1% to 10% of said diameter.

24. (Currently amended) The polymer particles of claim 17 comprising less than 50 weight ppm of particles less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter.

25. (Currently amended) The polymer particles of claim 17 comprising less than 50 weight ppm of particles less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter after exposure to mechanical stress.

26. (Currently amended) A process for preparing a swellable hydrogel-forming polymer particles of claim 17 comprising mixing a dried, water-absorbing hydrogel particles with at least one hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure.

27. (Previously presented) The process of claim 26 wherein said hydrophilic polymer of dendritic structure comprises a polyester formed from a polyol and 2,2-dimethylolpropionic acid.

28. (Previously presented) The process of claim 26 wherein said hydrophilic polymer of dendritic structure comprises a polypropyleneimine, a polyamidoamine, or a polyesteramide.

29. (Currently amended) The process of claim 26 ~~wherein said process is performed together with~~ further comprising a surface-postcrosslinking operation.

30. (Previously presented) The process of claim 29 wherein the surface-postcrosslinking operation is performed using at least one surface postcrosslinker and a solvent comprising a mixture of isopropanol and water.

31. (Currently amended) A method of absorbing blood or body fluids comprising contacting the blood or body fluids with a the swellable hydrogel-forming polymer particles of claim 17.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 31 wherein the body fluid is urine.

33. (Currently amended) A hygiene article comprising a the swellable hydrogel-forming polymer particles of claim 17, said articles selected from the group consisting of diapers, incontinence articles, sanitary napkins, tampons, and liners.

34. (New) The polymer particles of claim 17 wherein the hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure is present on the surfaces of the swellable hydrogel-forming polymer particles.

35. (New) The polymer particles of claim 17 wherein the swellable hydrogel-forming polymer particles comprise crosslinked, partially neutralized polyacrylic acid.